Case Notes

# Chapter 5: Managing For Quality

# Pfizer Gets It Right the First Time—Twice!

## Case Summary

*This case documents how Pfizer adopted the “Right First Time” Six Sigma quality initiative to successfully address a chronic quality issue with the cleaning process of its tri-blender machines.*

Case Analysis *This case illustrates key factors that accounted for the success of Pfizer’s Six Sigma quality initiative. It demonstrates that to be successful, Six Sigma efforts require the support of the firm’s managers and the collaboration of employees across different functions. This case furthers the understanding of Six Sigma from the perspective of total quality management.*

## Sample Answers to Case Questions

1. Pfizer’s experience demonstrates that correcting quality problems is often complex, time-consuming, and expensive. Why, in your opinion, does it make sense for companies to invest time and money to make these corrections?

Correcting quality problems is complex, time consuming, and expensive. However, the many benefits of quality management (e.g., higher customer satisfaction, revenue increases, reduced costs) often out-weight its costs. In addition, it is often less costly to prevent quality problems from happening in the first place than to fix them after defective products are in the hands of customers. Therefore, companies should invest time and money in quality management.

2. Search for “Six Sigma projects” on the Internet. What similarities do see among the projects you found? What conclusions can you draw about organizations that undertake these projects?

A Google search for “Six Sigma projects” returns over one million results. The similarities among the projects found include (1) having a process continuous improvement focus, (2) measuring quality costs and benefits quantitatively, (3) leading with experienced (black-belted) managers, and (4) involving employees across different functions directly. Organizations that undertake Six Sigma projects often enjoy a high quality reputation as quality problems are prevented from happening in the first place.